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LETTERS OF WASHINGTON.

[The letters here printed, from originals and copies in possession of this Society, do not appear in the collections of either Sparks or Ford.]

[TO GENERAL SMALLWOOD.]

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, 5 June, 1778.

Dear Sir:

In your last of the 2nd instant with which I was favored, you advised me that the motions of the enemies ships were closely watched. That 40 sail had passed Wilmington and anchored two miles below New Castle.

As it is of much consideration * * the number that have passed thro' the Cheveax de frieze and their present position, I would therefore wish to have the matter attended to with a good deal of care, and communicated as soon as possible.

Our information from Philadelphia* still wears the same face. They have crossed their waggon and a quantity of pork and bread over Cooper's ferry. A correspondent mentions that this rout will be directed by different roads to Edenborough, two miles below New Castle on the Jersey side, where he learns they mean to embark. But this is mere conjecture.

I am Sir,

Your humble Serv't,

G. WASHINGTON.

Gen. Smallwood.

[TO GENERAL SMALLWOOD.]

Philad^a, 1st January, 1779.

Dear Sir:

The inclosed was addressed to me by the Board of War, at the request of Mr. Rutherford. As it appears from the State of the Case that an officer is necessary to keep the man employed in the Shoe Factory at Newark in order, I think it will be best

* On June 18, the British evacuated Philadelphia.

for you to appoint one for that purpose. You may perhaps know more of the matter than I do, and therefore should there be any misrepresentation, you are at liberty to act as you shall judge proper. I am Dear Sir,

Your most ob't Serv't,

G. WASHINGTON.

P. S.—at all events I would have the men left at Newark for the winter.

To Gen'l Smallwood.

[TO HENRY LEE.]

Head Quarters,* July 12, 1779.

Dear Sir:

In mine to you of the 5th, I requested you to attend to the movements of the enemy on the river below, & for this purpose to engage the country people as look outs along the river, I would wish you to have such persons on whose fidelity & vigilance you can depend, stationed at different places, as low as fort Lee, that we may have the earliest intelligence of any collection of vessels, or boats, or embarkation of troops on the opposite side. The enemy are now manoeuvring to the Eastward, it may be to direct a part of our force that way, then to make a rapid movement back, embark and push up to the Forts. We are obliged to give a certain degree of countenance & protection to the Country which will occasion a detachment of our force & this makes it the more essential that we should be upon our watch this way. Your activity & care I rely upon. I am dear Sir,

Your obed. Serv't,

GO. WASHINGTON.

To Major Lee.

[Endorsed. The original of the above letter was obtained for the present Minister of France at Washington.]

* Head Quarters were at New Windsor, New York. It is in Orange county, about three miles southwest of Newburg. On July 15th, Lee, with the infantry of his legion, was engaged at the capture of Stony Point, but his force was only a reserve. On the 19th, with great skill and daring, they surprised the British garrison at Paulus Hook.

[TO HENRY LEE.]

Head Quarters West Point,* 7th October, 1779.

Dear Sir:

Your favor of the 3rd inst. came to hand yesterday.

I shall comply with your present engagements to the spies which you have promised to pay in specie, but as we have so little of this to spare for even the most pressing and important purposes within the enemy's lines, you will be careful to effect as much as possible with each other means as we have in our power; and as economical in all other expenditures as our circumstances are limited.

It is an object at present particularly interesting, to be well informed as to the enemys naval force. You will therefore be attentive to this as well as to such other intelligence as may be of use.

I have given a warrant to Captain Rudolph† for the sum granted by congress for the non-commissioned officers and privates concerned in the attack of Powels Hook. You will be pleased to distribute this money in proportion to the pay of the non-commissioned officers and privates, which was the manner observed in the case of Stony Point. I am D^r Sir,

Your most obt. Serv't,

GO. WASHINGTON.

P. S. You may in future or while on your present command mark your letters private.

I presume that you constantly keep an intelligent officer to observe the arrival or casting of the enemy's vessels. I wish to have his diary transmitted from time to time, say once a week, and more especially when any more extraordinary occurs in the

* * * * *

Major Lee, at English Town, Monmouth Co. [N. J.]

* West Point was Washington's headquarters from July 21, to November 28th.

† Michael Rudolph, Sergeant-Major Lee's Dragoons, April, 1778, Lieutenant, July, 1779. He was thanked by act of Congress September, 24, 1779, for his gallantry in leading the forlorn hope at Paulus Hook, and given the brevet of Captain. He served to the close of the Revolution and continued in the army until 1793.

[TO HENRY LEE.]

Head Quarters, Morristown, 13th April, 1780.

Dear Sir:

I have rec'd your fav' of the 10th. I am sorry to find that the repairs of your accoutrements and the general indisposition of your horses will prevent your moving so far as could have been wished, but I have confidence in your making no greater delay than is absolutely necessary.

The Board of War having power to order a General Court Martial, the prisoner you mention may be tried at Philadelphia, but it is worth considering whether you can have him tried and the proceedings sent up to me for my approbation which will be necessary, and an answer returned before the comp^a will probably march, the example should the man be found guilty and sentenced to death, is wanted more immediately for your own people than the army at large and therefore the desired good effect would be lost should you march before the trial can be regularly gone thro' and the proceedings confirmed.

You omitted to enclose the letter from Virginia to which you refer.

I wish you an expeditious, safe and agreeable march and every honor and success to yourself and your Corps; as I am with great Regard, Dear Sir,

Y^r most Ob't Serv't,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

[To Major Lee?]

[TO HENRY LEE.]

Head Q^r, Ramapough, June 28, 1780.

Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of this afternoon. I have had it for some days in contemplation to have the attempt made to which you allude, but from the information I had received with respect to the Enemy's situation and post, I did not imagine that it could be made nor do I now, in the way you seem to think it may. I wish you to inform me more particularly than you have of their force, according to the intelligence you may

have obtained and of the nature of their work; and that you will still, if circumstances admit, gain a more perfect knowledge of them than you may now possess & communicate it to me. I am, D^r Sir, with great regard & esteem,

Your most Ob't,

[To Henry Lee?]

[Endorsed.] June 28, 1780. Gen'l Washington.

Head Quarters,* July 19, 1780.

D^r Sir:

I have received your letter of the 16th. You mistook the point of giving me intelligence as by recurring to your instructions you will find I now depend on you for information of every occurrence, will save General Foreman† the trouble of a business which I could only with propriety request the favor of him to discharge till another could be sent to undertake it. For the future you will make a report every two days of the appearance at the Hook, in which the more detail the better. Tis almost as important for us to know what does not happen as what does happen.

In case of anything extraordinary it is instantly to be dispatched, particularly the sailing of the fleet in or out.

It is become unnecessary for the present that Captain Dennis & the Gentlemen with him should remain at Monmouth, I wish to see them at Head Quarters in their way home, when I shall give them some further explanations.

I am, with the greatest regard,

Yr. mo. Obit. Servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

P. S. I want a most exact account of the force of the enemy's fleet.

[To Major Lee?]

* At Preakness, New Jersey.

† David Forman, Brigadier-General, New Jersey Militia.

[TO HENRY LEE.]

Head Quarters,* July 24, 1780.

D^r S^r:

I am informed by Gen^l Foreman that there are a great number of horses in those parts of Monmouth County within the enemy's power belonging to disaffected persons. To prevent the enemy's having the benefit of these & to have it ourselves you will immediately set about driving off from the part of the county under the above description all the horses fit for wagon & riding service & deliver them to the Quarter Master Gen. giving certificates to the persons from whom they are taken, descriptive as far as you can of the quality & value of horses, you will do the same with respect to fat cattle, delivering these to the commissary General.

The moment you have executed this business you will proceed to Easton † where you will receive directions from Q^r M^r general for an impress of teams in Pennsylvania. These objects are of the greatest importance at the present juncture & I am persuaded you will execute them with your usual prudence, decision & celerity. I wish you to consult gen^l Foreman for what relates to Monmouth.

I am with the greatest regard,

Your most obt. serv't,

(Signed.) GO. WASHINGTON.

Copy. [Endorsed: The original of the above is given to Mrs. James Monroe, of N. Y.]

[TO HENRY LEE.]

Mount Vernon, 18 June, 1786.

My dear Sir:

Under cover of your favor of the 21st of April, which came duly to hand was a letter from Arthur Young, ‡ Esq. (author of

*At Preakness.

† Easton, Pa.

‡ The well known English writer on agriculture. Washington's letters to him were published in 1801.

the Tour thro' G. Britain and Ireland, with observations on the husbandry of those Kingdoms) informing me that he had sent me a compleat sett of all his works. As these have never yet come to hand, nor any advice of them, you would do me a favor (if you can recollect of whom you received the letter) by enquiring whether or not it was accompanied with a parcel. Mr. Young in his letter to me says these books were sent to the care of Mr. Athowes, Merch. of London; but why Mr. Athowes should send the letter without the parcel or either by way of New York, I cannot easily conceive, as there are vessels from London passing my door (the situation of which is well known to him) every day.

The winter & spring have been exceedingly opposed to our works at the Great Falls.* The incessant rains often preventing and at all times retarding the removal of earth. The latter rains in May, which were continual for more than 20 days have produced very calamitous effects in this country. Half the wheat (some say a great deal more) & $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Rye are blasted and the ground surcharged to that degree with water, as to have rendered plowing impracticable, which has involved the Indian corn that did come up, so deeply in weeds & grass as to exhibit a melancholy prospect in level lands of this crop also. The advantages with which the inland navigations of the rivers Potomack † & James are pregnant, must strike every mind that reasons upon the subject; but there is I perceive a diversity of sentiment respecting the benefits & the consequences which may flow from the free & immediate use of the Mississippi.‡ My opinion of this matter has uniformly been the same & no light in which I have been able to consider, the subject is likely to change it. It is neither to relinquish nor to push our claim to the navigation, but in the meanwhile to open all the communications which

* Of Potomac.

† On May 17, 1785, the Potomac Navigation Company was organized at Alexandria, with Washington as President. At the time of his death he owned twenty-four shares in the company, valued by him at \$20,666. He also left five shares in the James River Company, valued at \$500. The James River Company was incorporated in 1784.

‡ The intense desire of the West that the navigation of the Mississippi might be made free, made it a most important subject in American politics, and at one time threatened to sever the Union.

nature has afforded between the Atlantic States & the western territory & to encourage the use of them to the utmost. In my judgement it is a matter of very serious concern to the well being of the former, to make it the interest of the latter to trade with them; without which, the ties of consanguinity, which are weakening every day, will soon be no band, and we shall be no more a few years hence, to the Inhabitants of that Country, than the Spaniards or British are to them at this day; perhaps not so much, because commercial it is w^{ch} introduce others; and united are difficult to be broken. With the Spaniard these must take place if the navigation of the Mississippi is opened. Clear I am that it would be for the interest of the Western Settlers as low down the Ohio as the big Kanawha and back to the lakes to bring their produce through one of the channels I have mentioned; and the way must be cleared & made easy * * to them or else the ease with which the people glide down stream. [Illegible—worn off.] * * Whenever the new states become so populous and so extended to the Westward as really to need it, there is no power that can deprive them of the use of the Mississippi. Why then should we prematurely urge a matter which is disagreeable to others, and may be attended with embarrassing consequences if it is our interest to let it sleep? It may require some management to quiet the restless & impetuous spirits of Kentucky (of whose conduct I am more apprehensive in the business than I am of all the opposition that will be given by the Spaniards). Mrs. Washington & George & his wife join me in compliments & good wishes for Mrs. Lee & yourself. With very great esteem & regard, I am D^r Sir,

Your affec. H^{ble} Serv^t,

GO. WASHINGTON.

I will thank you for your care of the enclosed.

Copy.

[TO HENRY LEE.]

Mount Vernon, Mar. 14, 1789.

My dear sir:

Your letter of this date was put into my hands on my return from a ride, at the moment dinner was waiting, for which reason I have only time to express in a single word my love and thanks

for the sentiment contained in it, and to assure you that my best wishes, in which Mrs. Washington unites, are presented to Mrs. Lee, and that with sincere regard and affection,

I am ever yours,

GO. WASHINGTON.

P. S. If we have anything which can be of service to Mrs. Lee on her passage, to command it.

To Mr. Lee.

A True Copy from the Original. Frederick Wrench.

Copy.

[TO HENRY LEE.]

Philadelphia, July 3rd, 1792.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 20th ulto., was presented by Mr. Williams,* who as a professional man, may or may not be a luminary of the first magnitude for aught I know to the Contrary.

But to be frank, and I hope you will not be displeased with me for being so, I am so heartily tired of the attendance which from one cause or another I have bestowed on these kind of people that it is now more than two years since I have resolved to sit no more for any of them and have adhered to it except in instances when it has been requested by public bodies or for a particular purpose (not of the Printers) and could not without offence be refused. I have been led to make this resolution, for another reason besides the irksomeness of setting and the time I loose by it, which is that these productions have in my estimation been made use of as a sort of tax upon individuals by being engraved and that badly, and hawked or advertised for sale. With very great Esteem and regard, I am Dear Sir,

Most obed't & aff. ser.,

G. WASHINGTON.

To Governor Lee.

* Henry Williams, of Boston, Mass. In 1794 he painted a portrait of Washington, now in the Masonic Hall, Alexandria.

[TO HENRY LEE.]

Mount Vernon, Sept. 8th, 1797.

Dear Sir:

Your favor of the 27th ult. with its enclosures came safe to hand. When the negotiable note for \$1000 is paid and the 30 barrels of corn are received the amount of both will be carried to your credit.

I am told that the *present* price of wheat in Alexandria is 8s. but I can fix no price *now* for what may be delivered 2, 3, 4 or even 6 monthes hence or perhaps not at all (if you depend upon purchasing) in case of a rise when there is no objection to delivering any specific quantity, or at any specified time. All I can say on this subject is that if you have wheat of your own to dispose of or can purchase & deliver it at my mill where with my convenience of Boats & hands it can be done as expeditiously as at Alexandria, I will allow at the times of delivery the full price that is given in cash at the latter place, more I cannot, less I do not wish to do as the price of my flour must be regulated by the cost of the wheat.

You cannot I presume be at a loss for the statement of the acct. between us, when you will recollect that \$6,666^{2/3} was by agreement with interest on the whole sum of \$20,000 to have been paid me on the first day of December last, and that on the 27th of Feb^r following you paid me seven hundred dollars in cash & gave me Read & Fords obligation to transfer 70 shares a month after in the Bank of Columbia; * the value of which you estimated at 40 dollars each, when they were actually selling at that moment in the market at or near 18 p. ct. under par; by which I actually received no more than about \$2,300 in lieu of \$2,800, besides loosing a months interest on the last mentioned sum for which my receipt was passed. As the payments here mentioned are all I have received except 90 Barrells of corn, delivered the — day of last month at 21s. I presume the object of your request must be to know in what light I view the payment of the 70 shares. I shall therefore frankly declare that if a disinterested judge is to be found who will say that I ought, under the circumstances which prevailed at the time, to loose the difference

* Washington left at his death 170 shares in the Bank of Columbia, which he valued at \$40 each.

between the nominal and real price of the shares, I will never utter another word upon the subject; if there is not, or if there are no other circumstances of which I am ignorant, I conceive you yourself will not think it reasonable or just that I should loose near \$500 in the payment of \$2,800 which when my sole motive for receiving these shares at all was (inconveniently for myself) to accommodate you.

You say you informed me at the time that the stock was a little under par, & as you have said so, I will admit it, though my hurried situation at that time leaves no trace thereof on my memory — while there are several facts which cannot have escaped yours, namely, that more than once (without urging it ardently), I informed you that I was in want of money to clear me out of Philadelphia properly, and was obliged at last to leave the city without providing many articles of which my family stood in need, that I had declined renewing Wilson's notes when they were proposed, because I could not depend upon converting them into cash; that the offer of Columbia stock was late and unexpected, of course seeing no other prospect of obtaining any part of the Installment I took them as an accommodation to you; for it will not be denied that, if I had been disposed to appropriate money to this use, I could & would have been my own caterer, as I was * * the city;—that under these circumstances, hurried & perplexed (at the close of the session) as I then was with Executive, Legislative business, and with the necessary attention to the change w^{ch} was about to take place in my private concerns afforded no leisure to enquire into the value of Columbia Bank stock, even if I had attended to your information concerning it, and I should from a cursory inquiry, only have been struck with no other idea than what occurs continually at the Bank of Alexandria, viz: that just before a dividend, is a little above, and just after, a little below its nominal value.

I have expressed myself thus because it comports with my ideas of truth, justice and propriety; but I mean to enter into no contention or dispute on the subject, being with very great esteem & regard, Dear Sir,

Your most obedient & affectionate H^{ble} Ser't,
To General Lee. G. WASHINGTON.